

3

Piedmont, Cavour and Italy

POINTS TO CONSIDER

This chapter covers vital material, focusing on the way in which the northern state of Piedmont spearheaded the successful unification of Italy under its prime minister, Count Camillo de Cavour. The main areas to consider are:

- Piedmont and Charles Albert
- Cavour
- The war of 1859
- Cavour and Garibaldi

Try to avoid making final judgements on Garibaldi until you have read the next chapter.

Key dates

1815		Victor Emmanuel I returned to Piedmont as one of the Restored Monarchs
1821		Victor Emmanuel I abdicated
1831		Charles Albert became King of Piedmont
1848	February	Charles Albert issued the <i>Statuto</i>
	March 23	Charles Albert declared war on Austria
	July	Charles Albert defeated at Custoza
1849	March	Charles Albert defeated at Novara
		Charles Albert abdicated; succeeded by Victor Emmanuel II
1852		Cavour became prime minister
1854–6		The Crimean War
1858	July	Cavour and Louis Napoleon met at Plombières
1859	April 29	France and Piedmont went to war with Austria
	June 4	The battle of Magenta
	June 24	The battle of Solferino
	July 11	Truce at Villafranca
	July	Cavour resigned
1860	January	Cavour resumed the premiership of Piedmont
		Garibaldi's conquest of southern Italy
1861	March	Victor Emmanuel proclaimed King of Italy
		Death of Cavour

Key question
 Why did Piedmont
 become so central to
 the unification
 process?

1 | Background History

In 1720 the Dukes of Savoy, who ruled over the then poor and backward state of Piedmont in north-west Italy, became kings of the island of Sardinia. Piedmont and Sardinia together came to be known as the Kingdom of Sardinia, or Sardinia-Piedmont, but most usually just as Piedmont.

At the end of the eighteenth century Piedmont had only a small population, most of whom were peasants. Although a large number of children were born, the death rate was very high and life expectancy was short. The number of people living in the capital, Turin, was declining, there was little or no industry, and the countryside was poverty stricken.

Nevertheless, Piedmont had two advantages over neighbouring states:

- Unlike the other states it had a very strong army.
- It was well governed by an absolute monarch. The king, as head of state, made all the decisions and all the laws, decided what taxes should be levied and what they should be spent on, and appointed government ministers. He alone could declare war or make peace. There was no parliament and so the people had no share in government, no votes and no say in what happened.

French rule

At the end of the eighteenth century, Piedmont made an alliance with Austria. The Piedmontese royal family was closely connected by marriage with the French royal family and this made them automatically an enemy of the French Republic, which had deposed and executed Louis XVI, and then of Napoleon. In 1792, when the French army attacked Nice and Savoy, to the west of Piedmont, Austria and Piedmont declared war on France.

The war went badly for the allies with the result that, during 1799 and again from 1802 to 1814, Piedmont was united with France. This meant that Piedmont came into very close contact with French law and French government organisation:

- Piedmontese schools became part of the French education system.
- Piedmont's young men were conscripted into the French army.
- French became the language of polite society as well as of government, and the well-to-do members of society became more and more French in outlook.

There was no great opposition to French rule and the middle classes even found it to their advantage as it provided career opportunities. In government service and in the army, they were allowed to fill posts previously reserved only for members of the nobility. Only towards the end of French occupation was there unrest and dissatisfaction, with young men setting up anti-French secret societies.

A period of reaction 1815–31

In 1815 the King of Piedmont, Victor Emmanuel I, who had been in exile in Sardinia during the Napoleonic years, returned to Turin as one of the Restored Monarchs (see page 8). To make himself more welcome he abolished conscription and reduced taxation; but on his ministers' advice he announced that Piedmont was still bound by the laws made before 1800, which many considered out of date, and that these could not now be changed. Piedmont became once again an absolute monarchy. The French legal system, the *Code Napoléon* (see page 5), was abolished along with equal justice for all. Criminal trials were no longer open or fair, the only good thing being that torture was not reintroduced.

In 1819, just as local and central government were being modernised in Piedmont, alarms about the possibility of a revolution led to modernisation being brought to a sudden end. Membership of revolutionary secret societies was growing at this time and some moderate Piedmontese hoped that this would encourage the king to introduce political and other reforms. They were disappointed but not surprised, knowing there was little chance of action by Victor Emmanuel I or his brother and heir **Charles Felix**. They pinned their hopes instead on the second-in-line to the throne, Charles Albert.

On his return to Piedmont from exile in France, where he had lived since his father died when he was only two years old, Charles Albert saw just how severe and oppressive Piedmont's government had become. He showed sympathy with revolutionary students injured in riots in Turin and was known to have connections with revolutionary officers in the army. In March 1821 the liberals appealed to him to lead a revolution. Initially he agreed, but soon he changed his mind.

While he was dithering a revolutionary group seized the fortress of Alessandria in Genoa and established a provisional government calling itself the 'Kingdom of Italy' and, rather foolishly, declaring war on Austria.

Abdication

At this stage the 62-year-old Victor Emmanuel, tired of being pressured by revolutionary groups to grant political and social reforms and worried by reports of new army mutinies in Turin, decided to abdicate. He left for Nice, close to the western frontier of Piedmont, as revolution spread throughout his kingdom.

His heir, and younger brother, Charles Felix, was away from Piedmont and so Charles Albert seized the initiative and set up a new government and granted a new constitution. But when Charles Felix denounced him as a usurper, Charles Albert fled and the legitimate monarch gained control of Piedmont with the aid of Austrian forces. He promptly revoked the new constitution. Only in 1831, when Charles Felix died, did Charles Albert become, at last, King of Piedmont.

Victor Emmanuel I returned to Piedmont as one of the Restored Monarchs: 1815

Victor Emmanuel I abdicated: 1821

Charles Albert became King of Piedmont: 1831

Key dates

Charles Felix
1798–1849

King of Piedmont from 1821 to 1831, whose undistinguished reign was marked by political repression and economic stagnation.

Key figure

Key question
How significant a role did Charles Albert play in Italian unification?

Charles Albert Politics

The new king's earlier career had been marked by contradictions, and the same pattern now reasserted itself, so that it is very difficult for historians to interpret his real aims.

On the one hand, Charles Albert could give the impression of being an old-fashioned ruler, as in the illustration below. It seemed that he would be as absolute and oppressive a monarch as Victor Emmanuel or Charles Felix:

- He began his reign by signing a treaty with Austria and threatening to attack the Liberal government then in power in France.
- He refused to pardon the political prisoners left over from the 1821 revolutions.
- He increased the power of the Church in Piedmont.
- He tightened the already severe censorship laws.

Small wonder, then, that Mazzini and Garibaldi, two key nationalist figures, left Piedmont, soon to be followed by Gioberti (see page 30) who, anxious to publish his proposals for a federation of Italian states presided over by the Pope, left for the liberal city of Brussels. Another figure, Count Camillo de Cavour, also left Piedmont, which he dubbed 'that intellectual hell', preferring the greater freedom of expression found almost anywhere else, even in Austrian Lombardy.

A portrait of Charles Albert as a traditional ruler of the *ancien régime*.



On the other hand, some of Charles Albert's actions were those of a reformer:

- He made helpful changes in trade laws, reducing duties on imported goods and signing trade treaties with other states.
- He tidied up the legal system and its laws.
- He allowed non-nobles to fill senior posts in the army and the royal advisory council.
- Most important of all, in 1848–9 he granted his people a constitution which would survive to become the constitution of the united Italy of the 1860s.

Motives and character

Historians have tried to explain why Charles Albert changed from a liberal to reactionary and back to being a liberal again, but have not found any satisfactory answer. Truly he was, as some contemporaries dubbed him, *Re Tentenna* – ‘the wobbling king’.

One suggestion is that he had always been a nationalist, perhaps even a secret revolutionary; and, once king, was only waiting for a suitable opportunity to declare himself. ‘*Italia farà da se*’ (‘Italy will make herself by herself’) he famously insisted in the 1840s. Perhaps this was his wish all along. Yet this interpretation is not very convincing, since several of his actions after 1831, for instance his alliance with Austria, were reactionary.

Part of the answer must lie in Charles Albert's own complicated character. Many described him as secretive and unsocial, seldom showing any emotion, and some have believed him out of touch with reality. His attraction to the more mystical aspects of Catholicism, and his habit of wearing a **hair shirt**, are not necessarily signs of mental imbalance. But his belief that he was cut out to be a soldier and a leader of men was at best unrealistic. Admittedly he could be energetic and enterprising on occasions, but he lacked sustained determination as well as high-level abilities. Yet Charles Albert took to heart the idea of himself as a military leader and even came to believe, with disastrous results, that he was the military genius who would destroy the Austrian hold on Lombardy and Venetia.

Changing times

To understand fully Charles Albert's actions we also need to be aware of the changing circumstances in which his policies were made. Liberal influences were growing, so that from 1841, for instance, non-political gatherings, such as scientific conferences, were allowed for the first time. Although seemingly non-political, such meetings often helped to spread liberal and nationalist ideas. At one such congress, held in 1846, Charles Albert was referred to as ‘the Italian leader who would drive out the foreigners’, an idea which gave the king immense satisfaction.

As the 1840s wore on, the pressure for liberal reforms grew. In Turin there were peaceful demands for a constitution from the small but well-educated and outspoken middle and professional social classes. In Genoa, still smarting from the loss of its

← **Key question**
Why is it so hard to fathom Charles Albert's motives?

Hair shirt
A garment made of haircloth, causing discomfort to the body and thereby, according to believers, bringing its wearer closer to God.

Key term

independence (see page 8) and where Mazzini was a major influence, demands were more violent and revolutionary.

Key question
How liberal was the new constitution?

Key date
Charles Albert issued the *Statuto*: February 1848

Key term
Minister of the Interior
The European equivalent of the British Home Secretary, the minister responsible for, among other things, police and internal security.

1848 and the *Statuto*

The unrest in Turin spread, culminating in October 1847 in noisy demonstrations and threats of revolution which persuaded Charles Albert to agree to reforms and to grant a constitution early in the following year. As a devout Catholic he was probably influenced by the limited reforms recently introduced in the Papal States by Pius IX in his liberal phase (see page 32).

Charles Albert's general reforms were aimed at taking some of the power away from the monarchy and putting it into the hands of government officials. For instance, the police were in future to be under the control of the **Minister of the Interior**. Local government was also re-organised and local councils were elected.

The constitution that the king had promised was issued in the form of 14 articles on 8 February 1848 and was known as the *Statuto*:

Now, therefore, that the times are ripe for greater things and, in the midst of the changes which have occurred in Italy, we hesitate no longer to give our people the most solemn proof that we are able to give of the faith which we continue to repose in their devotion and discretion ...

We have resolved and determined to adopt the following bases of a fundamental statute for the establishment in our states of a complete system of representative Government ...

Article 2 The person of the Sovereign is sacred and inviolable. His ministers are responsible.

Article 3 To the King alone belongs the executive power. He is the supreme head of the State. He commands all the forces both naval and military; declares war, concludes treaties of peace, alliance and commerce; nominates to all offices, and gives all the necessary orders for the execution of the laws without suspending or dispensing with the observance thereof ...

Article 6 The legislative power will be collectively exercised by the King and the two Chambers.

Article 7 The first of these Chambers will be composed of members nominated by the King for life; the second will be elective, on the basis of the census to be determined.

Article 8 The proposal of laws will appertain to the King and to each of the Chambers but with the distinct understanding that all laws imposing taxes must originate in the elective Chamber ...

Article 10 No tax may be imposed or levied if not assented to by the Chambers and sanctioned by the King.

Article 11 The press will be free but subject to restraining laws.

Article 12 Individual liberty will be guaranteed.

The stress on representative government here must have cheered the reformers, but the articles were not very clearly expressed. Perhaps this was intentional, as a way for Charles Albert to avoid giving too much of his power away. Phrases such as

'The King's Ministers are responsible' left it uncertain for what or to whom they were responsible – to the king? To the chambers? To the people? Equally unclear is the reference to the 'restraining laws' limiting the freedom of the press. Some form of censorship is implied, but we do not know how moderate or severe it might be.

The full *Statuto* was published in March 1848 and included a number of other clauses relating to legal equality for all, whatever their religion, and for equal employment opportunities. It did not lay down who would elect members of the lower chamber. This was fixed later when the vote was given to men who could read and write and who paid taxes – in fact only about two per cent of the population of Piedmont.

The constitution was not a parliamentary one except in a very limited way, since it allowed the king to keep most of his existing rights. Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly a major advance. Many of Charles Albert's ministers thought it too extreme and so resigned, being replaced by more liberal-minded men.

Piedmont and Italian unification

Meanwhile, events outside Piedmont were moving rapidly and may well have influenced Charles Albert's decision to proclaim the constitution. Revolutions in Sicily, Naples, Lombardy and Venetia broke out in rapid succession between January and March 1848 (see pages 32–4). In Austrian Lombardy, Piedmont's eastern neighbour, extreme revolutionaries wanted an independent republic, while more moderate ones wanted union with Piedmont. Charles Albert saw advantages in putting himself at the head of a Lombard revolt against Austria, as eventually Piedmont might be able to dominate or even annex Lombardy. Typically though he hesitated, undecided whether to take military action or not, afraid that his absence might allow his own revolutionaries to stir up trouble in Genoa, the part of Piedmont most likely to organise a revolution.

War with Austria

Eventually public pressure and news that the revolutionary government now established in Venetia had voted for union with Piedmont persuaded Charles Albert to declare war on 23 March 1848: 'For the purpose of more fully showing by outward signs the sentiments of Italian unity, we wish that our troops should enter the territory of Lombardy and Venetia, bearing the arms of Savoy [the royal family of Piedmont] above the Italian tri-coloured flag'.

Again historians have argued about Charles Albert's motives. Did he act out of self-interest in the expectation of Lombardy and Venetia being 'fused' with Piedmont as the price of his help, thus merely clothing essentially **imperialistic** aims with appropriately nationalistic language? Or was he genuinely concerned to support a revolt against the foreigner, Austria, and make himself leader of a national independence movement?

Key question
Why did Charles Albert go to war with Austria?

Charles Albert declared war on Austria: 23 March 1848

Charles Albert defeated at Custoza: July 1848

key dates

Imperialistic
Motivated by the desire to dominate or capture other people's territory.

key terms

Key dates

Charles Albert
defeated at Novara:
March 1849

Charles Albert
abdicated; succeeded
by Victor Emmanuel
II: March 1849

The decision to act finally made, Charles Albert entered the war with enthusiasm. His army of 60,000 men, incompetently led by himself and ill-prepared for war, crossed into Lombardy and occupied the capital, Milan. The Austrians, who had already evacuated the city, brought up reinforcements and defeated Charles Albert at Custoza on the border with Venetia. The king had no choice but to ask for an armistice. This allowed the Piedmontese army to withdraw from Lombardy, leaving it again in Austrian hands.

Charles Albert broke the news to his people in a carefully edited version of events:

The want of provisions forced us to abandon the positions we had conquered ... for even the strength of the brave soldier has its limits. But the throbs of my heart were ever for Italian independence ... Show yourselves strong in a first misfortune ... have confidence in your king. The cause of Italian independence is not yet lost.

Early in 1849, having regrouped his forces and been persuaded, incorrectly, by his chief minister that Louis Napoleon, the newly elected President of the French Republic, would come to his aid if Piedmont again attacked Austria, Charles Albert re-entered the war but with as little success as before. He was heavily defeated by the Austrians at Novara, and then abdicated in favour of his son.

Key question
What was the
significance of
Charles Albert's
reign?

Charles Albert's legacy

The king's unsuccessful attempt to defeat Austria in battle was a major blow for Italian nationalists. Clearly, while Austria remained so powerful there was no way in which Italy could gain independence or unity without outside help. Yet at least this blunt fact was now obvious, and future Italian leaders could learn this lesson.

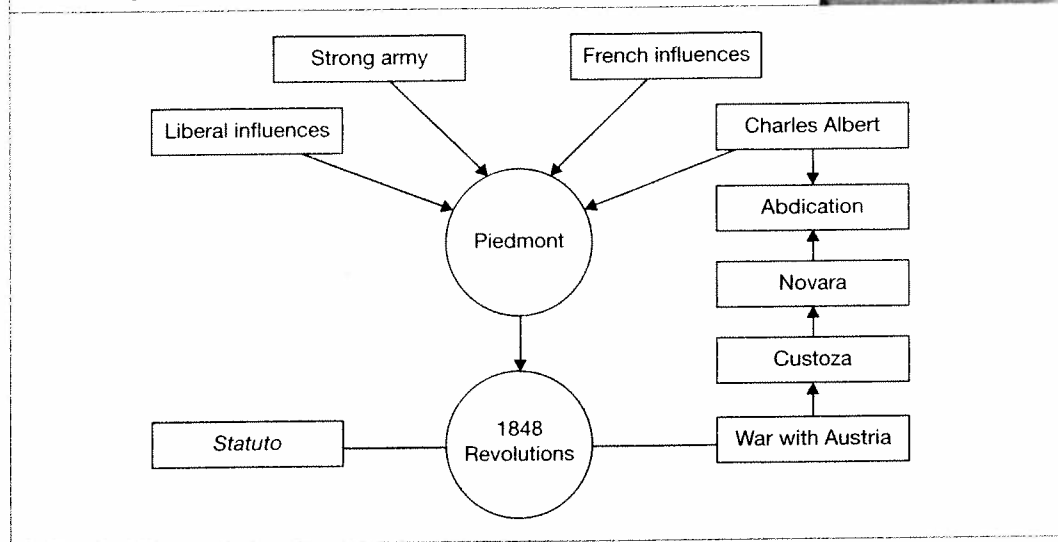
Charles Albert's other main legacy was the *Statuto*, which outlived him, the one tangible result in Italy of the revolutions of 1848. Victor Emmanuel II, who succeeded his father in March 1849, has traditionally been seen as a courageous figure defying Austrian plans for the *Statuto*'s abolition. Yet most historians now think that Victor Emmanuel was not particularly anxious to keep the constitution but was pressured into doing so by the Austrians themselves, who feared that if he got rid of it he would become so unpopular that not only he, but the monarchy itself, would be threatened. In Austrian eyes anything, even a state with a moderately liberal constitution, was better than a republic.

The constitution therefore remained in force, and in spite of its limitations gave an opportunity for an active political life in Piedmont, something that did not then exist anywhere else in Italy. With a reasonably free press, an elected if unrepresentative assembly, and a certain amount of civil liberty and legal equality, Piedmont attracted refugees from the rest of Italy during the next decade. This was to be a period dominated by the political leadership of Cavour, the military successes of Garibaldi and the interventions of Louis Napoleon of France.

Key dates

Key term

Summary diagram: Piedmont and Charles Albert



2 | Cavour

Cavour as prime minister

Cavour became prime minister with an expert knowledge of economic and financial affairs, and under his guidance Piedmont undoubtedly became a more developed and richer state. Its trade increased in value by 300 per cent in the 1850s, its industries flourished, and its railways became the envy of Italy. By 1860, Piedmont's 800 kilometres of railway track constituted one-third of the peninsula's total.

Yet in 1852 Cavour had only a limited knowledge and understanding of foreign affairs. In the 1830s he had expressed a vague wish that Italy should be united and free from Austrian domination. He hoped, he said, 'for the soonest possible emancipation of Italy from the barbarians who oppress her' but was worried because 'a crisis of at least some violence is inevitable'. He wanted this crisis 'to be as restrained as the state of things allows' because he feared that revolutionary movements, with their stress on republicanism and social upheaval, 'would only make unity more difficult to achieve'. But too much should not be read into these remarks, for in the 1850s he still referred on a number of occasions to the idea of Italian unity as 'rubbish'. Probably he did not begin to see it as a realistic aim until 1859.

The Crimean War

Cavour quickly gained the experience in foreign affairs. Two years after he took office an international crisis led to the start of the **Crimean War**. Traditionally Cavour has been seen as happily joining in the war against Russia in order to gain the friendship of Britain and France and to be sure of some of the spoils, as well as a seat at the eventual peace conference. Undoubtedly this motive did influence his decision to join in the war.

Key question

How important was Cavour in the creation of a united and independent Italy?

Key question

How successful was Cavour in
(a) domestic and
(b) foreign affairs?

Cavour became Prime Minister of Piedmont: 1852

The Crimean War: 1854–6

Key dates

Crimean War

A war fought between Britain and France, with some support from Piedmont, against Russia. Austria decided to remain neutral.

Key term



Profile: Count Camillo Benso di Cavour 1811–61

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1811 | - Born in Piedmont, the second son of a rich noble, who was a successful businessman and a minister in the government of Victor Emmanuel I |
| 1821 | - Sent away to the Royal Military Academy; rebellious student, always in trouble |
| 1820s | - Worked for a short time in the service of Charles Albert, and then became an officer in the army, where again he had a reputation as a rebel. Developed an interest in economics and politics while serving at a frontier post |
| 1833 | - Left the army and visited London and Paris. His interest was sparked by Britain's industrial growth, and especially by its industrial cities, railways and banking system |
| 1835 | - Returned to Piedmont. He then took over running part of the family estate, importing artificial fertilisers from the USA and making use of new agricultural methods and machinery. He continued his study of economics and politics and began writing articles on a wide range of subjects |
| 1846 | - Wrote on his favourite subject, railways, which he described as the great marvel of the nineteenth century. Helped to set up the Bank of Turin, himself becoming one of its first 10 directors |
| 1847 | - Charles Albert freed the press from censorship and Cavour founded his own publication, <i>Il Risorgimento</i> , and used it to publicise his political ideas. Elected to the first Piedmontese parliament; soon became well known as a non-revolutionary, liberal politician |
| 1850 | - Appointed Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and the Navy. He made free trade treaties with France, Britain and Belgium, and even with Austria. Prime Minister Massimo d'Azeglio did not enjoy the everyday business of government and handed over much of it to Cavour |
| 1851 | - Became minister of finance, after obtaining better terms for a government loan to build a railway than the government itself had been able to do |
| 1852 | - Fell out of sympathy with d'Azeglio's traditionally minded government, and made an alliance with a moderately radical |

- | | |
|----------|---|
| | party in parliament to form a new centre party. Encouraged to do this by d'Azeglio's decision to reduce the freedom of the press slightly, which Cavour feared might lead to a return to press censorship and absolute government |
| May | – His position as a minister became too difficult and he resigned from the government. He went abroad, and met the President of the French Republic, Louis Napoleon |
| November | – Asked by Victor Emmanuel II to form a government on condition he dropped d'Azeglio's controversial civil marriage bill, which aroused the opposition of the papacy. Cavour was himself a secularist , but reluctantly he accepted. He remained as prime minister, apart from a few months in 1859–60, until his early death |
| 1861 | – Died |

Civil marriage
Marriage without a church service.

Secularist
One who favours the state over the Church.

Key terms

The nine years of Cavour's premiership were some of the most momentous in the history of Italy. By the time of his death, all of Italy apart from Venetia and Rome had been unified. Controversy centres on how important his role was in this process, and on whether he actually intended that the Italian peninsula, rather than merely northern Italy, should be unified.

Cavour's speech to parliament in 1855 presented his vision of a new Italy whose international reputation would be improved further by sending young men to fight in the war, rather than staying at home and taking part in revolutions, plots and conspiracies which damaged Italy's reputation abroad:

The sons of Italy can fight with true valour on the field of glory ... I am sure that the laurels our soldiers will win on the battlefields of the east will do more for the future of Italy than all those who have thought to revive her with the voice and with the pen ... so that she can take her rightful place among the Great Powers.

Nevertheless there is evidence that Cavour was doubtful. He was swayed by the king, who was eager to take part in the conflict, and also by Britain and France. These countries put pressure on Cavour partly because they knew that additional, Piedmontese, troops would be useful in the conflict and partly because of a more subtle motive. They wanted Austria, as well as Piedmont, to join the war and they reasoned that, if both these states were on the same side, the Austrians would be reassured that Piedmont would not interfere in Lombardy.

Cavour and Louis
Napoleon met at
Plombières: July 1858

Either way, by joining in the war Cavour did achieve his aim of a seat at the peace conference held in Paris in 1856. There he was able to negotiate on almost equal terms with the Great Powers, and there he also made the further acquaintance of Louis Napoleon, now Emperor Napoleon III. They kept in touch over the next two years until, in July 1858, Cavour was invited to a meeting at Plombières close to the Franco-Swiss border.

The Plombières meeting

This meeting was kept very secret – even the French Foreign Minister was not aware of what was happening. Cavour was equally secretive. He had told only Victor Emmanuel and one other minister about the meeting, which was beginning to look like a conspiracy.

Whose were the proposals discussed at Plombières? Napoleon had issued the invitation and organised the meeting. It might be expected that the meeting's agenda would be his, but there is evidence to suggest that Cavour took with him an outline memorandum that contained proposals very similar to what was finally agreed.

Three days later, on 24 July, Cavour sat down and wrote a very long and detailed letter to Victor Emmanuel giving his version of the discussion:

As soon as I entered the Emperor's study, he raised the question which was the purpose of my journey. He began by saying that he had decided to support Piedmont with all his power in a war against Austria, provided that the war was undertaken for a non-revolutionary end which could be justified in the eyes of diplomatic circles, and still more in the eyes of French and European public opinion.

Both men were aware that unless the war seemed reasonable to Europe's leaders, Austria might find allies. Certainly Prussia made it clear that it might support her German neighbour, Austria; and even Britain, though generally sympathetic to Italian aspirations, would not support a war of unprovoked aggression. Furthermore, the Powers were fearful that Austrian domination might well be replaced by French control. If this fear proved justified, there might have to be a coalition of Powers to defeat this new Napoleon.

The ideal solution, of course, would be if Austria could be manoeuvred into declaring war. But, failing this, what might be a suitable issue on which France and Piedmont could start the war?

'The search for a plausible excuse presented our main problem', Cavour told his king. He suggested that the Austrian Emperor had broken certain commercial agreements and had extended his territory in Italy further than treaties allowed:

The Emperor did not like these pretexts. 'Besides', he added, 'inasmuch as French troops are in Rome, I can hardly demand that Austria withdraw hers from Ancona and Bologna'. This was a reasonable objection ...

My position now became embarrassing because I had no other precise proposal to make ... We set ourselves to discussing each state in Italy, seeking grounds for war. It was very hard to find any ...

Unable to find a suitable excuse for France and Piedmont to make war on Austria and drive it out of Italy, the two men focused instead on how a future Austria-free Italy would be organised:

The valley of the Po [Piedmont], the Romagna, and the Legations [parts of the Papal States] would form a kingdom of Upper Italy under the House of Savoy [the Piedmontese royal family]. Rome and its immediate surroundings would be left to the Pope. The rest of the Papal States, together with Tuscany, would form a kingdom of central Italy. The Neapolitan frontier would be left unchanged. These four Italian states would form a **confederation**, the Presidency of which would be given to the Pope to console him for losing the best part of his States.

Confederation
A loose alliance of states.

Key term

Cavour told his king that this arrangement was fully acceptable: Victor Emmanuel would become 'the legal sovereign of the richest and most powerful half of Italy, and hence would in practice dominate the whole peninsula'.

Next, Louis Napoleon and Cavour considered what benefits France might receive from fighting a war against Austria:

The Emperor asked me whether Your Majesty would cede Savoy and the County of Nice. I answered that Your Majesty believed in the principle of nationalities and realised accordingly that Savoy ought to be reunited with France; and that consequently you were prepared to make this sacrifice, even though it would be extremely painful to renounce the country which had been the cradle of your family and whose people had given your ancestors so many proofs of affection and devotion. The question of Nice was different, because the people of Nice, by origin, language and customs were closer to Piedmont than to France.

The outcome

Hence a deal was almost struck:

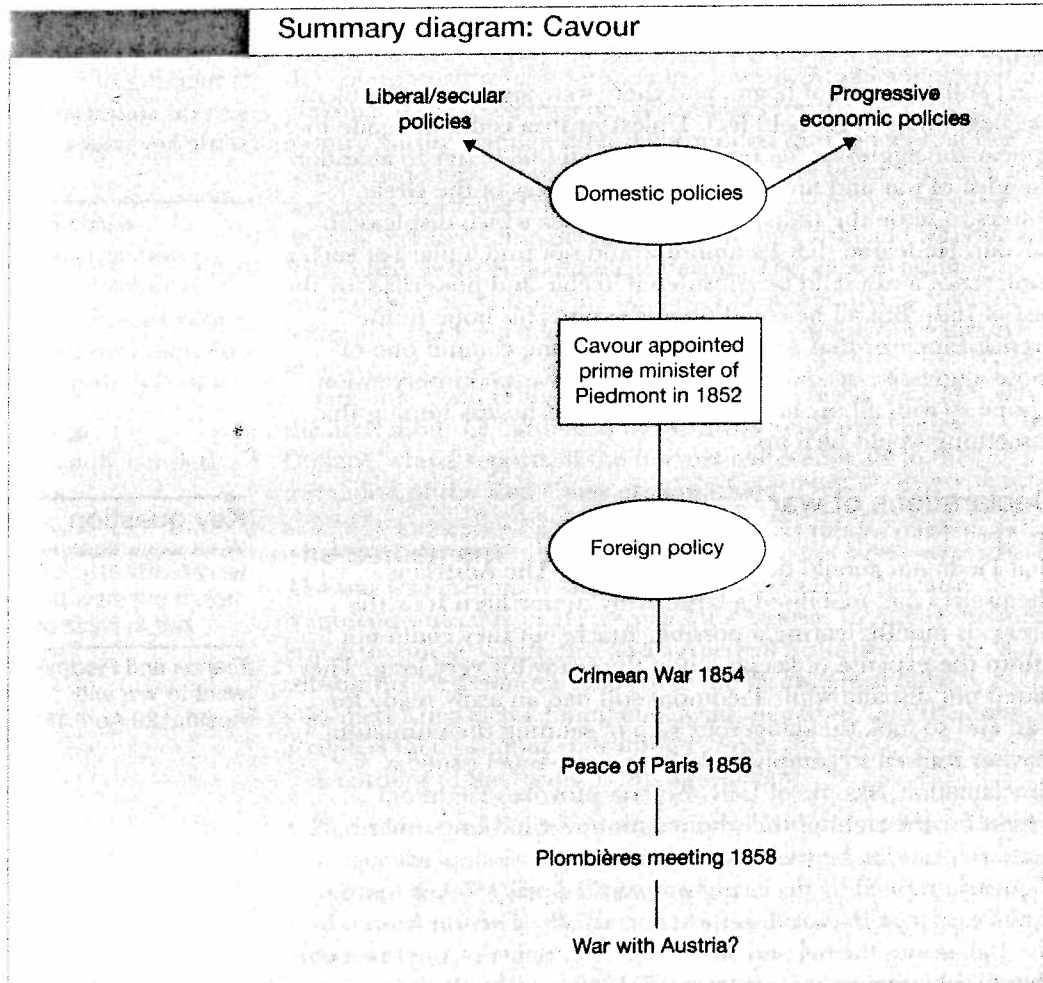
- Napoleon estimated that an army of around 300,000 men would be needed to drive Austria out of Italy: he would provide 200,000 and Piedmont and other Italian states 100,000.
- Italy would become four states, loosely grouped under the Pope as a figurehead. (A united Italy, if one were possible, might become a threat to France or arouse the suspicions of the other Powers. For further consideration of Louis Napoleon's motives, see pages 110–13.) Piedmont's power would grow considerably.
- As a reward, France would receive Savoy. Whether Nice would also be handed over was at this stage uncertain.
- The diplomatic ground would have to be prepared carefully, so that Austria would have no allies. Hence a good excuse for war

would have to be found, although as yet neither Cavour nor Napoleon could devise one.

- A provisional agreement was also reached for a marriage between Victor Emmanuel's daughter, Clothilde, and one of Napoleon's cousins.

The arrangements reached at Plombières were largely incorporated into a secret treaty in January 1859, although some changes were made. In particular, Nice was added to Savoy as Napoleon's proposed reward, and the idea of an Italian confederation headed by the Pope was abandoned. But would these plans ever come to fruition? Could a suitable pretext for war be devised?

Summary diagram: Cavour



3 | The War of 1859 and its Consequences

Preparations for war

After Plombières and the secret treaty, Cavour began to prepare Italians psychologically for war by writing an emotional anti-Austrian speech for Victor Emmanuel to give at the opening of parliament in January 1859. This included the words, 'We cannot be insensitive to the cry of anguish [*grido di dolore*] that comes to us from many parts of Italy'. '*Grido di dolore*' quickly became a catchphrase throughout Italy to express popular anti-Austrian feelings. Nationalistic feelings were heightened.

Cavour also **mobilised** the Piedmontese army, in March 1859. But without Louis Napoleon's support, he could not risk fighting alone against Austria. There must be no repetition of Piedmont's defeat by Austria at the battle of Custoza, just over a decade earlier.

Yet still war did not begin, and there were signs that Napoleon was beginning to get cold feet. Unless Austria could be made to appear the aggressor, he reasoned, it might be better to abandon the idea of war and turn instead to a **congress** of the Great Powers to settle the Italian question, an idea which displeased Cavour. He feared that Piedmont would not find a place at such a conference and would be considered 'feeble and powerless' by the rest of Italy. But all he could do was express his hope to the French Emperor that Austria 'will before long commit one of those aggressive acts which will justify your armed intervention. I hope so with all my heart'. In other words he was hoping that something would turn up.

Declarations of war

In April 1859 something did turn up. Austria issued a demand that Piedmont should demobilise its army. The Austrians themselves had mobilised a large army in northern Italy the previous month, fearing a possible attack, but they could not afford the expense of keeping it at the ready for very long. They dared not disband while Piedmont still had an army ready for war, and so took the dangerous step of sending the ultimatum. Cavour refused to comply and Victor Emmanuel issued a proclamation: 'People of Italy! Austria provokes Piedmont ... I fight for the right of the whole nation ... I have no other ambition than to be the first soldier of Italian independence'.

Austria replied by declaring war on 29 April 1859. A few days later Napoleon declared support for his ally. The war known to the Italians as 'the Second War of Independence' – the first being that fought against the Austrians in 1849 – had begun. It was a short, violent and terrible conflict.

The battles

The war started slowly, marked by chaos, confusion and unpreparedness on both sides. Napoleon's troops travelled to Italy by train, as befitted a modern army; but, owing to bad organisation, they arrived in Lombardy before their equipment

Key question
How did Piedmont
prepare for war?

Mobilised
Organised for a
possible war.

Congress
A meeting of
several countries to
settle key issues.

Key terms

Key question
What issue began the
war?

France and Piedmont
went to war with
Austria: 29 April 1859

Key date

Key question
Why did the war end
so quickly?

Key dates

Battle of Magenta:
4 June 1859
Battle of Solferino:
24 June 1859
Armistice at
Villafranca: 11 July
1859

and provisions. 'We have sent an army of 120,000 men into Italy before we have stocked up supplies', Napoleon complained to Paris. There were not enough tents for the men and, even worse, there was not enough ammunition. The only consolation was that the Austrian and Piedmontese generals were even more incompetent, so that it was some time before fighting could actually begin.

Lombardy was quickly overrun by French and Piedmontese forces. The Austrians were defeated at Magenta on 4 June, by the French army, and at Solferino on 24 June, by a combined French–Piedmontese force. (See the map on page 65.) The carnage at both battles and on both sides was horrific.

The Austrian Emperor, Victor Emmanuel and Napoleon, all present as spectators, were deeply shocked. 'Better to lose a province than undergo such a horrible experience again', mused the young Austrian Emperor, Franz Joseph. Napoleon offered his personal linen to be torn up as bandages for his men, but this gesture hardly compensated the wounded for the fact that the official bandages, along with the medical and other supplies, did not arrive until after the war was over. Hence many who were terribly maimed often lay for hours on the battlefield without any help, until death ended their suffering. The local peasantry stripped the boots from the bodies of dead and dying alike. At Solferino, the French lost almost 12,000 men, the Austrians even more.

The only good thing to come out of this useless slaughter was the arrival on the battlefield of the Swiss journalist Henry Dunant, whose reports of the horrors led eventually to the formation of the **Red Cross** organisation.

Key terms

Red Cross
An international agency founded in 1864 to assist those who were wounded or captured in wars.

Ceded
Officially handed over.

Key question
What were the major provisions of the truce?

The settlement

The war was mercifully short – only seven weeks – because Napoleon suddenly made a truce with Austria. In August he met Franz Joseph at Villafranca and agreed an armistice. He did not consult his Piedmontese allies over the terms. He simply informed King Victor Emmanuel what they were, and the king accepted them without consulting Cavour.

According to the terms of this agreement:

- Piedmont would receive Lombardy, although, to allow Austria to save face, it would first be **ceded** to France and then passed by Napoleon to Victor Emmanuel.
- The previous rulers of Tuscany, Modena and Parma, who had fled when revolts had broken out in their lands, were to be restored to their Duchies. (This was the theory, although it was not clear how it was to be achieved, and it soon became apparent that they would never return.)
- Austria still kept Venetia and therefore remained a powerful influence in Italy.

'The Giant and the Dwarf'. A cartoon from *Punch*, 11 June 1859.



THE GIANT AND THE DWARF.

"BRAVO, MY LITTLE FELLOW! YOU SHALL DO ALL THE FIGHTING, AND WE'LL DIVIDE THE GLORY!"

Napoleon's motives

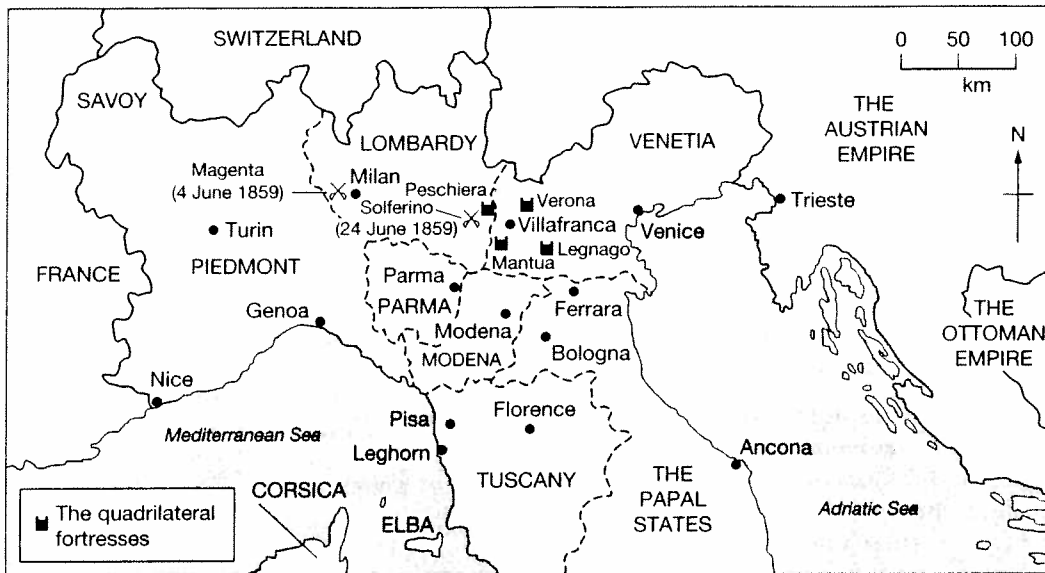
Why did Napoleon make his sudden and unexpected truce with Austria in July and then, without consulting Cavour, agree to the armistice of Villafranca? There are many possibilities, and the answer probably lies in a combination of them:

- As a military leader, Napoleon had not the stomach for war. The battles of Magenta and Solferino, with their great loss of life, affected him severely. He may well have felt that by bringing the war to an early end he could at least prevent a similar bloodbath.
- The Austrians had been defeated but not routed. Their forces had withdrawn into the stronghold of the '**quadrilateral**'. There was thus little hope that what was left of the French and Piedmontese armies could breach the Austrian defences. Reinforcements would be needed, and obtaining these would take time, and casualties in a further round of fighting would be high.

Quadrilateral

A group of four heavily defended fortresses near the Austrian border (in Mantua, Peschiera, Verona and Legnago).

key term



Northern and central Italy 1848–59.

- There was danger too that Prussia, already mobilising along the Rhine frontier, might take advantage of Napoleon's absence to attack France. Alternatively, Prussia might decide to come to the aid of Austria if the war were allowed to continue, and a combined Prusso-Austrian army might prove invincible.
- In France itself, there was growing criticism of the whole Italian adventure (summed up in the cartoon from Britain's *Punch* magazine, on page 64), and Napoleon was becoming increasingly suspicious of Cavour's activities. In Tuscany the Grand Duke had left his Duchy and gone to Vienna, and a provisional government had announced that it wished Tuscany to be united with Piedmont. Revolution had spread to Modena and Parma where Piedmontese armies moved in and took over, setting up provisional governments, while Cavour's agents were known to be encouraging revolution in the Papal States. It seemed to Napoleon that Piedmont was trying to gain more territory and more power than had been agreed at Plombières.

Key question
Why did Cavour
resign?

Key date
Cavour resigned: July
1859

The resignation of Cavour

Napoleon III considered that Piedmont was doing well – indeed too well – out of the war. On the other hand, the French Emperor himself, aware that he had not, as promised at Plombières, driven Austria out of Italy, could not demand Nice and Savoy as his share of the spoils.

Nevertheless, Cavour felt that he had been badly led down. He disliked the fact that Austria still controlled Venetia, and was appalled with the supposed arrangement in Tuscany, Modena and Parma. He was also furious that he had not been consulted over the ending of the war. Generally a calm, reasonable man who knew the importance of compromise, Cavour also had a

furious temper. In a hysterical interview with Victor Emmanuel, in which he appeared to lose control of himself, he insisted that Piedmont should continue the war against Austria without French aid. When the king, very sensibly, refused, he resigned as prime minister.

An expanded Piedmont

Cavour was out of office for the next nine months. Yet the situation turned out to be far better for Piedmont than he had imagined. His work as prime minister had borne fruit. Piedmont may not have extended its influence quite as quickly as he had hoped, but the growth in its power was unmistakable:

- In Tuscany, a carefully rigged assembly voted unanimously in August for **annexation** by Piedmont.
- So too did Modena, Parma and the Romagna in the Papal States. Because of the expected opposition of Napoleon, however, these unions were not immediately put into effect. Instead, provisional, pro-Piedmontese governments were left in control in each of them.
- The Armistice of Villafranca developed into a peace conference held in Zurich in November, and this time Piedmont was invited to send representatives. The Peace of Zurich arranged that Lombardy was to be handed over, first by Austria to France and then by Napoleon to Piedmont. The problems of central Italy were shelved, to be dealt with by one of Napoleon III's favourite methods, a Congress, although objections from the Pope – who feared that he would lose territory in the Papal States – meant that it never took place.

Hence, when Cavour returned as prime minister, he was able to put the final touches to Piedmont's expansion or, from another perspective, to the unification of northern Italy.

Annexation of Tuscany and Emilia

In mid-March 1860 in Tuscany the population voted for union with Piedmont. Despite Villafranca, the new state of Emilia (made up of the Duchies of Modena and Parma, together with the Romagna) (see the map on page 125) did the same. This was in fact a foregone conclusion: the war against Austria had whipped up nationalist feelings and the provisional governments had carried out extensive propaganda campaigns:

- In Tuscany, 386,445 voted for annexation, and 14,925 against.
- In Emilia, 427,512 voted for annexation, and 756 voted against.

In Turin decrees were published declaring Tuscany and Emilia part of the Kingdom of Piedmont.

Nice and Savoy

By this time Cavour realised that one way to restore good relations with Napoleon was to arrange for Nice and Savoy to be handed over to him without further delay. A secret treaty between

Key question
How favourable to Piedmont were developments in 1859–60?

Cavour resumed the premiership of Piedmont: January 1860

Annexation
The act of taking possession of land and adding it to one's own territory.

Key date

Key term

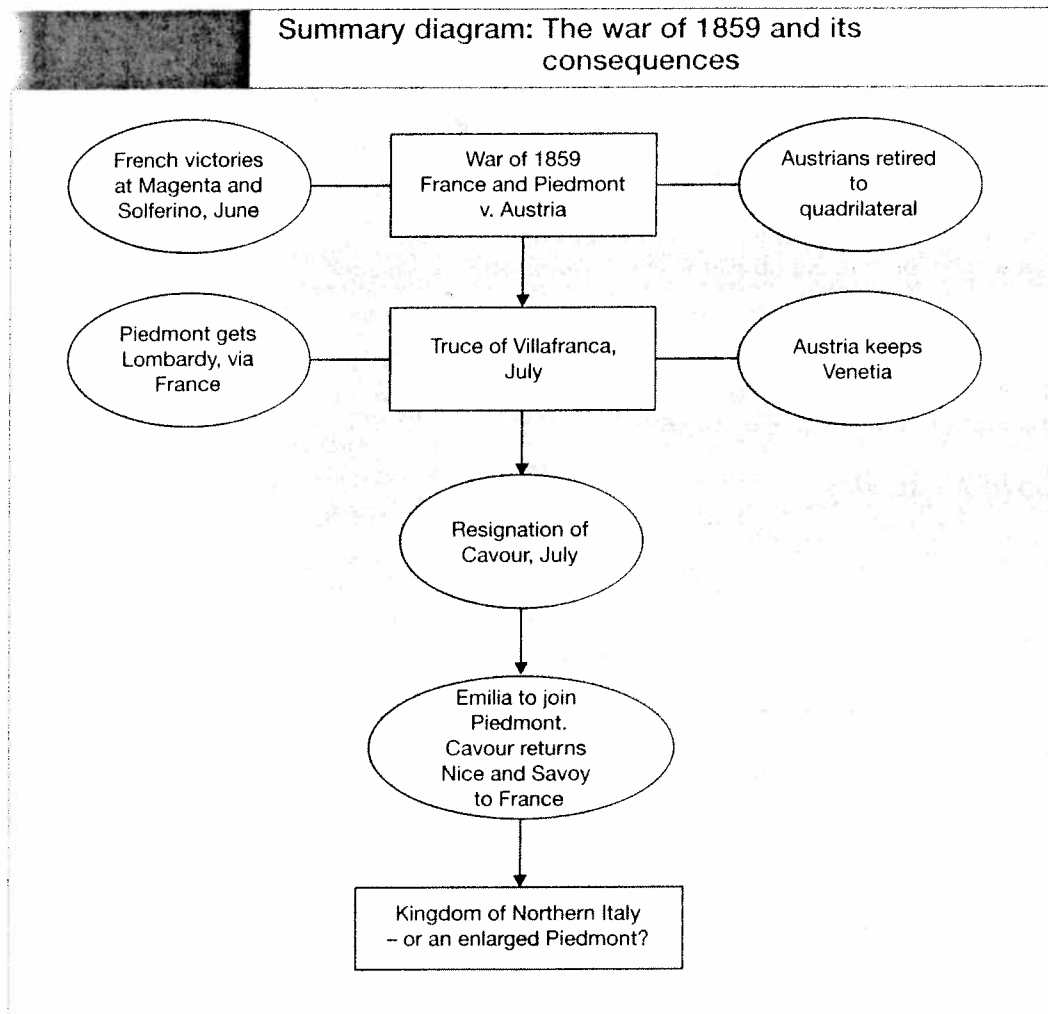
Victor Emmanuel and Napoleon in March transferred Savoy and Nice to France, subject to the results of a popular vote in both places. These votes were taken in April and again huge majorities voted in favour of union:

- In Savoy, 130,583 were for, with 235 against.
- In Nice, 24,448 were for, with 160 against.

The result in French-speaking Savoy was not unexpected, but in Nice, which was Italian speaking, the vote were suspicious. The presence of a French army in Nice on its way home from Lombardy may have had something to do with it.

Among those who questioned the accuracy of the results was Garibaldi, who had been born in Nice and was one of its elected representatives in the Piedmontese parliament. The transfer of Nice to the French, he later recalled, made him feel 'a foreigner in the land of my birth'. He was preparing a military expedition to prevent Nice being taken over by France when he was diverted by an outbreak of revolution in southern Italy on the island of Sicily.

Summary diagram: The war of 1859 and its consequences



4 | Cavour and Garibaldi

Historians have argued for a long time about the motives of Cavour and Garibaldi and about the relations between the two men. Their own writings are not much help. Cavour died without writing an autobiography. He did send a large number of letters, but these were 'edited' after his death – with some items being suppressed and others simply invented – to show him in an unrealistically good light. Garibaldi did write memoirs but only covering the period up to 1850, and they are generally unreliable.

Both Cavour and Garibaldi were born in Piedmont, and both played leading roles in the unification of Italy. But there the similarity ends. The two men were highly contrasting figures. Cavour was a nobleman – well-educated, intelligent, outwardly cool, calm and collected – as well as the fat little politician and diplomat. Garibaldi was a rough, ill-educated soldier and leader of men.

Ready to take chances at any time, passionate and charismatic, Garibaldi had ideas that were simple and straightforward, and he did not allow them to get in the way of action. He had come under the influence of Mazzini in 1831 and, although he afterwards abandoned republican ideals, becoming instead a monarchist and following Piedmont's king, Victor Emmanuel II, he always retained his nationalist beliefs and continued to fight for an independent and united Italy. All his actions were aimed at driving out Austria, the foreigner, from Italian soil and establishing an Italian kingdom under the rule of Piedmont. These aims became an obsession which dominated his life and dictated almost his every action.

Cavour was altogether more cautious. He had written in the 1830s about the *possibility* of a united Italy, but even at the time of the Plombières meeting with Napoleon in 1858 he was not fully committed to the idea of a united Italy.

Cavour's tactics

Cavour was realistic enough to know that '*Italia farà da se*' (Italy will make herself by herself), as Charles Albert had hoped (see page 52), was an impossible aim. There was no hope of Piedmont being able to expel Austria from northern Italy without outside help, and the only available source of help was Napoleon and the French army. Cavour had reasoned that France would be prepared to help, at least up to a point, in return for Nice and Savoy, but he also realised that Napoleon would not agree to unlimited expansion of Piedmont and would not wish Piedmont to become the leader of a united Italy. After all, an Italy of separate states could be useful to France in any conflict with Austria, while a truly united Italy might become a possible threat to France herself. It was probably not until Napoleon accepted Piedmont's acquisition of Tuscany and Emilia in early 1860 that Cavour saw greater possibilities.

Key questions

Why did disagreements between Cavour and Garibaldi affect the political/military situation in 1859–60?

How did Cavour and Garibaldi differ in their personalities, aims and tactics?

Even then he does not seem to have been convinced that a totally united Italy was either possible or desirable. Piedmont had gained control over northern Italy by diplomacy and limited war; anything more in the way of territorial gains might involve a disastrous civil war. For him it was time to stop. Not so for Garibaldi.

Garibaldi's boldness

Garibaldi wanted Rome, Venetia, Naples and Sicily, as part of a united Italy, and he wanted them at once. In 1860 he undertook a military expedition to Sicily to unite southern Italy with Piedmont by revolution. His expedition and its results are dealt with in the next chapter (see pages 88–93).

Cavour's motives

It is difficult to know what Cavour thought of Garibaldi's plan. Some historians – especially those who tend to stress the glorious nature of the *Risorgimento* and to see the leading figures as working together to produce unification – believe that Cavour pretended to stop Garibaldi while secretly supporting him. This may have been because he thought of Garibaldi as an ally or because he intended from the start to use Garibaldi for his own purposes.

However, other historians – stressing the unpredictable nature of events and seeing the leading figures as fundamentally opposed – see Cavour as Garibaldi's enemy, opposed to his plans for unification. He pretended to support the expedition to Sicily, partly because he feared that open opposition might lead to a loss of popular support for the government in Piedmont's elections; but secretly he worked to make it fail. These historians believe that he disliked the whole idea of Garibaldi's expedition to attack Sicily and Naples.

'I omitted nothing to persuade Garibaldi to drop his mad scheme', wrote Cavour just before Garibaldi set out for Sicily in April 1860. There is little doubt that Cavour disliked the man, thinking him stupid and probably untrustworthy. Garibaldi had been a republican and had only lately become a royalist. Cavour remained unsure whether this change of heart was genuine. If he were successful in the south, might he demand a republican Italy? If so, this would, he thought, at best lead to a divided country, with a republic in the south and a monarchy in the north.

On 12 July 1860 Cavour complained privately that Garibaldi was 'planning the wildest, not to say absurdest schemes'. But when it became clear, in early August, that the expedition to Sicily had been successful, he changed his tune:

Garibaldi has done the greatest service that a man can do; he has given the Italians self-confidence; he has proved to Europe that Italians can fight and die in battle to reconquer a fatherland.

At this stage Cavour probably believed that unification was inevitable. He added that 'If, in spite of all our efforts, he should

liberate southern Italy as he liberated Sicily, we would have no choice but to go along with him.'

Most historians now favour the interpretation that Italy was unified as a result of the clash of Garibaldi and Cavour, rather than by their working in harmony. Yet the attempt to pluck out the secret motives of historical characters is always hazardous. We are on safer ground in reconstructing what they actually did and in assessing the results of their actions.

Success in southern Italy

When, against all expectations, Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily had proved successful by the end of July, Cavour had to decide how to react. He called for the annexation of Sicily by Piedmont. There were difficulties, however, for while the Sicilians wanted independence from Naples they certainly did not want to replace Naples by Piedmont. Then came news that Garibaldi and his men had crossed to the mainland on 19 August and were marching north towards Naples.

Cavour may have thought that France and perhaps also Austria – both Catholic powers – would intervene if Garibaldi's army proceeded from Naples into the Papal States. France had kept a garrison in Rome since the days of the Roman Republic (see page 38). Any attack on the city therefore would certainly lead to conflict. Cavour was also worried about the growing popularity of Garibaldi not only in Sicily but also in Piedmont and throughout Italy. Might he even lead a revolution and take control in Piedmont, or indeed in the whole of Italy?

Cavour decided that he must act:

- First, he tried to stir up pro-Piedmontese risings in Naples, before Garibaldi entered the city. But these failed, and Garibaldi's army continued its northward progress.
- Cavour then became bolder. He decided to organise an invasion of the Papal States from the north to block Garibaldi's army, which was invading from the south, before it could reach Rome and the Pope.

The invading Piedmontese troops were not well received in the Papal States and met considerable opposition from the civilian population on their way south to stop Garibaldi's army. But Napoleon III agreed to turn a blind eye to the invasion, so long as Rome itself was untouched, and opposition was defeated. As for Garibaldi's forces, they were successful against the Neapolitan forces, winning a victory on 18 September; but their progress further north was barred by a Piedmontese army led by Victor Emmanuel II.

On 26 October Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel, at the head of their two armies, met at Teano. But there was no showdown. Garibaldi simply agreed to hand over the territories he controlled to the king (see page 92). Almost all of southern and central Italy came under the effective control of the Kingdom of Piedmont. Cavour's gamble on invading the Papal States had paid off, and

Key question

How did Garibaldi's success in southern Italy serve the cause of Victor Emmanuel and Cavour?

made the unification of Italy under the leadership of Piedmont and the government of Victor Emmanuel a reality.

The Kingdom of Italy

Cavour had arranged for the people of Naples and afterwards of Sicily to vote whether or not there should be a united Italy under Victor Emmanuel. Organising the voting was particularly difficult in Sicily where most of population was illiterate and did not understand the Italian of the north. Difficulties were allegedly overcome by providing each voter with two voting slips, one saying 'yes' the other 'no', and by having two ballot boxes similarly marked. Unfortunately even those who could read had no idea who or what Victor Emmanuel was. Even the word 'Italia', which had been Garibaldi's slogan during the fighting, merely confused Sicilians further. Union with Piedmont was not mentioned. Nevertheless, most people probably assumed they were voting for the end of the feudal monarchy of the Bourbons, and there were overwhelming votes in favour of union. In Naples 99.2 per cent voted yes, and in Sicily 99.8 per cent.

Voting also took place in November 1860 in the eastern and central parts of the Papal States occupied by Piedmont, and again enormous numbers voted for union with Piedmont. This time 99.3 per cent were reported to be in favour.

In March 1861 the Kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, with Victor Emmanuel II as King of Italy. Not quite all of the peninsula was now part of the new kingdom: the 'Patrimony of St Peter', the area around Rome, remained under the control of the Pope and in French occupation, and Venetia remained in Austrian hands. Everywhere else unification was complete and under the control of Piedmont.

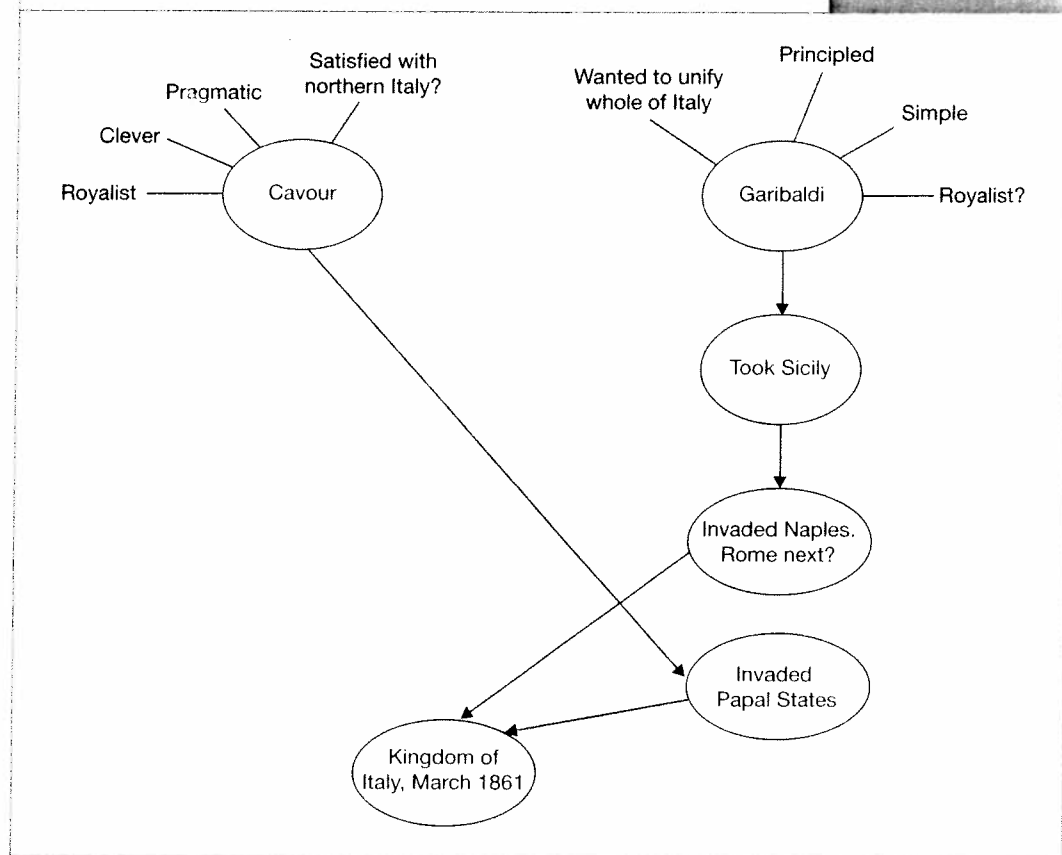
Cavour did not live to see a fully united and independent Italy. He died in March 1861 from 'a fever'.

Key dates

Victor Emmanuel
proclaimed King of
Italy: March 1861

Death of Cavour:
March 1861

Summary diagram: Cavour and Garibaldi



Study Guide: AS Questions

In the style of AQA

- (a) Explain why Piedmont went to war against Austria in April 1859. (12 marks)
- (b) 'Cavour was only interested in Piedmontese expansion.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. (24 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the questions.

- (a) You should try to provide a variety of factors to explain why Piedmont did this. Think in terms of long- and short-term factors. Long-term factors might include: the dominance of Austria in the Italian peninsula; the desire to avenge the failures of 1848–9 (pages 54–5); the ambitions of Piedmont and of Cavour. Short-term factors would include: the Pact of Plombières in January 1859 (pages 59–61); Austria's demand for the demobilisation of the Piedmontese army; and Cavour's ultimatum (page 62). Remember also that it was actually Austria that declared war on Piedmont, not the other way round.

Try to prioritise and show the links between the factors that you have selected. You should provide an overall conclusion and convey some judgement. You might consider, for example, whether Cavour set out to engineer war or whether he seized the opportunity to advance this cause because of Napoleon III's actions.

- (b) This question is asking you to evaluate Cavour's motivation. You should try to think of some examples that could be given in support of the statement and some which would disagree with it. You will then need to decide whether on balance you would agree or disagree and argue accordingly. Don't forget you will need to show material on both sides to provide a balanced answer, but don't be afraid to make a judgement and dismiss the points you find less convincing. In support of the statement you might include:

- Cavour worked to strengthen Piedmont internally.
- He made the Pact of Plombières and went to war to expand Piedmont (his aim was a Kingdom of Upper Italy under the House of Savoy).
- He tried to continue the war against Austria, even after the French made peace.
- Piedmont's superiority bore fruit in 1860 (page 66).
- Cavour was prepared to hand over Nice and Savoy to Napoleon as the price of Piedmontese expansion (pages 66–7).
- He prevented Garibaldi taking Rome (pages 70–1, 91–2 and 143).
- Even the final constitution of the new Italian state might be said to reflect the move begun by Cavour towards Piedmontese expansion (page 127).

In disagreement with the statement you might include:

- In Cavour's earlier career he had talked about a united Italy.
- He may have pretended to stop Garibaldi, but actually secretly encouraged him.
- By 1869 he believed unification was inevitable.
- He reacted to Garibaldi's efforts and brought about the annexation with the south.

In addition you might consider whether Cavour was neither driven by a desire for Piedmontese expansion nor for Italian unification, but other motives, such as personal ambition or love of his monarch. Could it be that he was simply propelled by circumstance?

In the style of Edexcel

How far do you agree that the role played by Cavour primarily accounts for the unification of most of Italian Piedmont in 1861?

(30 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the question.

This is a question requiring you to evaluate Cavour's contribution to the unification process by weighing that against other factors which played a part. You only have 40 minutes so it will be important to spend about 5 minutes getting a clear plan and organising your material. Aim to devote about one-third of your time to Cavour's role, and the other two-thirds to assessing the contribution of other key factors that played a part, and reaching an overall conclusion. Above all, resist the temptation to write a narrative of the steps towards unification. What factors apart from Cavour's role will you identify? You will need to be selective in the time available.

Two other key factors you could consider would be:

- Assistance from Napoleon III of France.
- The role of Garibaldi.

Cavour's role:

- Successful diplomacy and co-operation with France (pages 59–60, 66–7 and 70) securing vital assistance against Austria and preventing opposition from Napoleon III to Piedmont's expansion.
- Decisive action in invading the Papal States to halt Garibaldi's advance in 1860, resulting in the fateful meeting at Teano (pages 70–1).

The role of Napoleon III of France:

- Contribution to the defeat of Austria at Magenta and Solferino (page 63), but note the limitations of Napoleon III's support for the expansion of Piedmont's influence (pages 64–5).

The role of Garibaldi:

- His vital contribution in the period May 1860 to March 1861: military success in Sicily and Naples (pages 69–70); his handing over of territories to Victor Emmanuel (pages 70 and 92).

What will you conclude? All three individuals played a significant part and you can show that all three were essential to the achievement of the degree of unification that took place in 1861. Do Cavour's actions link them together? His diplomacy was important in securing French co-operation; his bold decision to invade the Papal States may have prevented foreign intervention (page 70) and it led directly to the creation of the Kingdom of Italy.

In the style of OCR

Study the four sources and then answer **both** sub-questions. It is recommended that you spend two-thirds of your time in answering part (b).

(a) Study Sources B and C.

Compare these sources as evidence for Cavour's qualities as a political leader. (30 marks)

(b) Study all the sources.

Use your own knowledge to assess how far the sources support the interpretation that, in the period 1848–61, Cavour was dedicated to the unification of the whole of Italy. (70 marks)

Source A

From: Cavour, The Risorgimento, March 1848. Cavour, writing as a journalist, describes his reaction to the fall of Metternich and the uprising in Milan, both in March 1848.

The supreme hour for the Piedmontese monarchy has struck; the hour for strong deliberations, the hour on which depends the fates of empires, the fortunes of peoples. In the face of the events in Lombardy and Vienna, hesitation and delays are not possible. We are used to listening to reason rather than the heart, and having considered our every word we must now in conscience declare that there is only one path open for the Nation, for the Government, for the King. War! Immediate war without delays.

Source B

From: Petrucelli della Gattina, writing in 1861. An opposition politician in the Turin parliament assesses Cavour's record shortly before the death of Cavour on 6 June 1862.

Count Cavour's strength does not lie in his principles; for he has none that are inflexible. But he has a clear, precise aim: that of creating a unified and independent Italy. Men, means, circumstances are matters of indifference to him. Cavour possesses overall knowledge of domestic politics; he has grand

ideas, at once very liberal and uncomplicated; but he lacks the practical skill of their implementation. This is the vulnerable side of his policy. However, no one questions his superiority in foreign affairs where he is strong and a match for the situation.

Source C

From: Michelangelo Castelli, Count Cavour, published in 1886. A close life-long friend assesses Cavour's record.

From the Congress of Paris, Italy gained an unexpected advantage because of his skill. His instinctive understanding of our times made him a believer in political and civil equality. The principles of a free Church in a free State, and that Rome must be the capital of Italy, were proclaimed because he was convinced that they would reconcile religion, the papacy and Italy. It was his habit to proclaim a principle and hold to it. Detailed policy was always governed by circumstances, though he kept his eye fixed constantly on the final goal – the unification of Italy.

Source D

From: H. Hearder, Cavour, published in 1972. A modern historian assesses Cavour's aims for the various states of the Italian peninsula.

Throughout his life, Cavour wanted considerable change, though change in the direction rather of Italian independence than unification. Because he wrote in passionate terms of the need to secure Italy's independence from foreign powers – which meant, in effect, from Austria – it has sometimes been assumed that he wanted to create a united nation state. The fact that he did not believe such a development to be remotely possible, until the shattering events of 1860 transformed the situation, should not obscure the sincerity with which he anticipated the independence of all Italian states.

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the questions.

Read the 'General Introduction' section at the start of the study guide in Chapter 2, page 46.

- (a) First read through each extract slowly and jot down points relevant to the stated issue: 'Cavour's qualities as a political leader'. Then see how far the views in the two sources either agree or disagree, and also add any separate points the two witnesses make.
- They are agreed that Cavour wanted the unification of Italy; the language each uses makes this point forcefully.
 - They are also in some agreement in praising Cavour's skills in foreign affairs. Gattina delivers a positive overall judgement, while Castelli implicitly praises his handling of the Congress of Paris (see page 59).
 - They also agree that Cavour was to some degree pragmatic, able to react to circumstances. Gattina stresses that though his aim was clear, he was not tied to particular means to achieve it; and Castelli adds that his 'detailed policy was always governed by circumstances'.
 - Yet whereas Gattina decides that Cavour has no actual principles, merely liberal ideas which he failed to implement, Castelli clearly thinks that he was a real liberal, one who would stick to his principles.
 - Castelli also praises Cavour's domestic policies, particularly his attempt to reconcile Church and state in Italy, while Gattina did not deliver such a positive verdict.

Source B accuses Cavour of being unprincipled, whereas Source C holds a strongly opposite view. It is also worth pointing out that the sources have different points of view. Gattina, we are told, was an opposition politician, and therefore one likely to make criticisms, while Castelli, as a friend of Cavour, is likely to be biased in his favour. Gattina was writing in the thick of events, as they unfolded, while Castelli's account of Cavour was written a quarter of a century later. How would this time-frame affect their perspectives? Is one more likely to be accurate in his views than the other?

As pointed out in Chapter 2, the way to answer this sort of question properly, and so score high marks, is to pick out individual themes/points and compare what each source says on each, e.g. whether Cavour had political principles, whether he was flexible on the day-to-day political details.

- (b) The issue you have to 'assess' (i.e. evaluate, picking out its strengths and weaknesses, and saying to what degree it is in accordance with the facts) is how far what you know fits with what the sources argue on the question of whether Cavour was dedicated to the unification of the whole of Italy from 1848 to

1861. We have already been presented with this idea in Sources B and C, which support it. Neither Gattina nor Castelli, however, actually argues the case or puts forward precise evidence to back it up.

What of the other two sources? In Source A Cavour is calling, in vivid language, for a war against Austria. He also talks about 'the Nation'. But is he calling for a war for the unification of the whole of Italy? A war against Austria would not achieve this, and when Cavour talks about 'the Government' and 'the King' he is clearly referring to Piedmont. He may of course have intended that an expanded Piedmont would eventually draw in all of the peninsula of Italy, but there is no evidence for this in Source A. As for Source D, we are given the view of Harry Hearder that Cavour was dedicated to the independence of Italy from foreign rule, but not to its unification into a single state. According to Hearder, Cavour's aims only expanded to encompass a single state with 'the shattering events of 1860'. But in this extract, there is no evidence for such a view. Clearly we have to call, as the question tells us to, on our 'own knowledge'. What points might be made?

- If Cavour did, in the heady days of the 1848–9 revolutions, want the unification of Italy, he clearly changed his mind a few years later (see page 56).
- As a Piedmontese politician, Cavour was definitely a moderniser. He wanted to develop his state's economy and transport system, and here he achieved much success (see page 58). Of course, he may have done this as a means to achieve Italian unification at a later date, but there is no good evidence for this.
- Yet he clearly wanted to expand Piedmontese rule in northern Italy, and to this end he enlisted the support of the Emperor Napoleon III against Austria. The result was the war against Austria in 1859 and the formation of the Kingdom of Northern Italy by March 1860. Cavour may have seen this as a stepping-stone to full unification, but he gave no sign of this at his famous meeting at Plombières with Napoleon III in July 1858. He was very aware that the creation of a single self-governing Italy would be seen as a threat by the French Emperor. The diplomatic game he was playing, which involved ceding Nice and Savoy to France, seemed to rule out Italian unification in the short term (see pages 59–61).
- Therefore Garibaldi's initiative in the spring of 1860 was absolutely vital. Cavour had not planned or anticipated events, he merely took advantage of them (see pages 68–71).

The context of Metternich's overthrow and the events in Lombardy and Venetia, highlighting the focus on Austria, might be used to show Cavour's interests were limited to Habsburg-controlled lands. This theme is reinforced in Source D that stresses independence from Austria and rejects the idea Cavour was dedicated to unification. Reference to the designs of Cavour

as late as March 1860 could be made to provide contextual support for this counter view, as could his suspicions of Garibaldi and the efforts he made to constrain Garibaldi and, equally, Cavour's worries about Rome. Against that, the stress in Source B on Cavour's aims could be considered in the context of events in 1858–60 and the even stronger support for the view in Source C could be judged against the Congress of Paris.

So, how might you conclude? Is it possible to agree with the proposition in the question, that Cavour was dedicated to Italian unification throughout the relevant period? It is just about possible, if we argue that Cavour simply put on a show of disapproving of Garibaldi's exploits in Sicily and Naples (see page 69). But it is much easier to argue that the view is simply incorrect. He may well have been dedicated consistently to the independence of Italy or to the expansion of Piedmont, but not to Italian unification. His aims expanded with the course of events.